

TRAINING

CYCLING SYSTEMS

as told by Louis Simmons, Westside Barbell

crease their strength, then because the bench press becomes quite heavy near the end of the cycle and you back off on your triceps, your bench press can suffer as your triceps strength diminishes. The same holds true for the other lifts as well. It is quite common to start a long cycle with no gear, then add a belt, before artificial means help you lift more. If a lifter squats 600 easily on meet day and could have done 400 more, why not just repeat the same

GAUGLER CYCLE:

WEEK	SQUAT lbs / reps	BENCH lbs / reps	DEADLIFT lbs / reps	4" BLOCK lbs / reps
1	525 / 3 495 / 5	325 / 4,3 310 / 5	575 / 1 535 / 2	455 / 2,5
2	540 / 3 510 / 5	340 / 4,3 325 / 5	600 / 1 560 / 2	480 / 2,5
3	555 / 3 525 / 5	355 / 4,3 340 / 5	625 / 1 585 / 2	505 / 2,5
4	570 / 3 540 / 5	370 / 4,3 355 / 5	650 / 1 610 / 2	530 / 2,5
5	535 / 3 505 / 5	335 / 4,3 320 / 5	585 / 1 545 / 2	465 / 2,5
6	550 / 3 520 / 5	350 / 4,3 335 / 5	610 / 1 570 / 2	490 / 2,5
7	565 / 3 535 / 5	365 / 4,3 350 / 5	635 / 1 595 / 2	515 / 2,5
8	580 / 3 550 / 5	380 / 4,3 365 / 5	660 / 1 620 / 2	540 / 2,5
9	560 / 2 520 / 3	360 / 4,2 330 / 5	595 / 1 555 / 2	475 / 2,5
10	575 / 2 535 / 3	375 / 4,2 345 / 5	620 / 1 580 / 2	500 / 2,5
11	590 / 2 550 / 3	390 / 4,2 360 / 5	645 / 1 605 / 2	525 / 2,5
12	605 / 2 565 / 3	405 / 4,2 375 / 5	670 / 1 630 / 2	550 / 2,5
13	550 / 2 510 / 3	365 / 4,2 335 / 5	600 / 1 560 / 2	MEET
14	MEET	MEET	MEET	MEET

squat cycle and do the 640 at the meet? For some reason, almost all lifters increase their squat and this time fall to make progress. Why? They have over-estimated their true potential and end up with their opener. Your training must be based on your true max, not a hypothetical and egotistical goal which leads to failure.

At some point during your cycle you must decrease reps to accommodate for the heavier weight. Normally, by doing this you sacrifice volume. It takes a certain amount of work known as volume to lift 500, 600, and 700 lbs. If the work load falls below what is needed to lift any of these weights, you will fail. That is the greatest fault of this type of cycling. Plus, you are injury prone at the end of the cycle. The only advantage I see is that it works for those who lack confidence. They must squat 700 on two or three occasions before attempting it at a meet. Is this you? If so, you are not building strength but confidence. You and your trainer must work on that outside the gym.

Progressive overload training may trick a lot of people because in the first 6 weeks or so you become more muscular because the weights are light and the reps are high, producing a lot of muscle hypertrophy, luring you into thinking you are making great gains, which you are - in size, but not strength. I'm sure you have read about great expectations by this or that lifter, only to see that his contest results are less than satisfactory at contest time. Why? They are hypothetical goals.

Another misconception in the so-called pre-cycle phase, where reps are 10, 8, and 6, is that you may think you are getting in shape, but for what? Actually, you are gaining endurance because you are conserving yourself to be able to do 10, 8, and 6 reps. For example, I have done 100 stumps at a single set, yet I have experienced cramps by doing 10 very concentrated reps. Does this sound familiar? I hope you have seen some major faults in this type of cycling, just as I have.

GAUGLER CYCLE: Rick Gaugler was a tremendous strength star in the 1970s and 1980s, and I coin the phrase Gaugler cycle after his success. He too would use long cycles to gain strength, but instead of continuously going up, he would go up for 4 weeks, drop back down somewhat, and then go up again for 4 weeks. He would start with 525 X 3 and jump 15 lbs per week for 4 weeks. Then he would start over 10 lbs. heavier for weeks 5-8, now at 580 X 3, dropping to 560 X 2. Weeks 9-12 he did 650 X 2, always

dropping 40 lbs for a triple. The week before the meet he would do 550 X 2 and 510 X 3.

He did a lot of special exercises and seldom ever missed a training weight. A very positive thing if you break it down is that Rick trained at 85% and above during the complete cycle, which is impossible for most lifters. Rick and a few others are the exception due to the use of supportive gear and fabulous genetics. Although most authorities agree that training with 85% and above is best for strength, they also agree that only a blessed few can live through such heavy continuous training. Mike Bridges and Ed Coan are able to do it, and a few can lift one lift, but seldom two or all three lifts. So, in conclusion, it makes a lot of sense from a scientific point of view, but only a few could survive it. Continuous use may lead to injury, and speed work must accompany this program periodically.

PERCENT: The third type of cycling is known as percent training. It works for men and women, drug-free or not, because it is based on your own strength. Percent training does not mean simply to convert poundages to percents, but to do the majority of training with weight between 65% and 82%. This is where explosive strength is best employed. It is done by carefully

PERCENT TRAINING CHART

PERCENT	REPS / SET	OPTIMAL TOTAL REPS	RANGE
65 %	4 - 6	24	18 - 30
70 %	3 - 6	18	12 - 24
75 %	3 - 6	18	12 - 24
80 %	2 - 4	15	10 - 20
85 %	2 - 4	15	10 - 20

and correct form is easy with this type of training.

The squat is done with 65-82%. A heavier percentage than the bench is used because an average suit and belt are utilized. Perfect form is used on every rep, and again, accelerated strength is the key. The reps are kept at 2 to prevent straining the shoulder as well as reducing bicipital tendinitis. Very short rest periods are used, 45 seconds to 1 1/2 minutes, to gain muscle tension, something that is neglected with most low-rep programs. You may think, how can training so light produce a record squat? This is done with high volume. For example, if 70% is 500, this is done for 24 total reps per workout, which equals 12,000 lbs. As we add weight, we reduce a set or two to stay close to our optimal training volume (for myself, 12,000 lbs). When you find your volume range, stay within 500-1000 lbs of it.

A special note: by training the bench press this way, we can use 3 different grips with the same weight. Most lifters close-grip a lot less than with their regular grip, so your close grip is consequently heavier than 65-72%. You could be pushing up as much as 85% when you use a close grip. The same holds true in the squat, by using a normal stance plus one wider to build the hips and one closer for the lower back and quads. This cannot be done with a more conventional cycle.

The deadlift itself is trained with single reps because there is no lowering of the bar. So we believe that by doing reps you are wasting valuable strength. For example, the second rep is always easier than the first because you have created a groove, or motor pathway, making each succeeding rep easier until muscle fatigue sets in. If you don't believe me, try squatting out of the bottom or benching out of the bottom while in a power rack and see how tough it is. Here is how the cycle should be done: 15 singles with weights ranging from 65 to 70%, 12 singles using 71-75%, 8 singles with 76-80%, and 6 singles

charting the number of lifts done at a certain percent range (see chart). By doing this, we continuously use weight and reps that are correct for our current strength. Nothing is hypothetical about this; it is all fact. Your cycle is based on what you actually can do. Each lift is trained differently but always with the correct number of sets and reps for the correct percentage.

The bench press is trained at 65-72%. We train so light because we don't wear bench shirts in training and we must train the muscles that the shirt neglects, the triceps. The bench press normally is done for 3 reps, although we are able to do 10 reps with our training weight. Using compensatory acceleration

with 81-85%. All workouts should be done with 45 seconds rest between sets. This closely resembles what Jim Cahill did several years ago when he pulled 832 at 220.

Our training is basically reversed from conventional ways: the classical lifts are done with moderate weight, whereas special exercises are done extremely heavy. This way we develop our weak points during the entire year. There is no precontest cycle. We stay in shape year-round. We don't psyche, we train. All of our training builds strength. We don't waste 6 months per year getting back in top shape, we stay there. So can you. This type of work has developed 27 Elites, which I think is unprecedented.

You must realize that percent minicycles are to be done all year long. A top lifter who got my training by percent program second-hand uses it for precontest training, when in fact it should be used continuously until the meet. He instead switches back to the progressive overload system and seldom does in the meet what he did in the gym. Don't let this happen to you. This is a much safer way to train as well as being very productive. For example, it has produced a 148 who benches 390 by using 245 for 8 X 3 reps, a 275 who benches 540 by using 350 for 8 X 3 reps, a 165 who squats 610 by using 415 for 10 X 2 reps on a parallel box, and a 242 teenager who squats 735 by using 455 for 10 X 2 reps on a below-parallel box.

Injury-free training is the key to success. Why train with near max weights, continuously risking career-ending injury, when you can get the carry-over we do by using this system? So there you have it. Take your pick. Remember, you get strong in the gym and prove it in the meet, so choose your cycle carefully like the 27 have done at Westside Barbell.

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